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ABSTRACT

In a study exploring how writers use audience awareness and how that awareness is related to the writer's age, four eighteen-year-old and four nine-year-old writers were assigned letters to write for two different audiences: a friend and a great aunt whom they had never met. Thinking-aloud writing protocols were produced at the time of writing. At the end of each writing session, the letter and taped writing protocol became the basis for a stimulated discussion. When both tasks were completed, writers were interviewed about the audience and two writing tasks. Findings show that both groups demonstrated an understanding of their audiences and an awareness that audiences affect writers' decisions. The eighteen-year-olds considered the audience while they were writing and in the stimulated recall and interview sessions. Their writing protocols revealed that the two different audiences led them to consider the appropriateness of ideas, words, and sentences. In contrast, the nine-year-olds seldom reflected on their audiences while they were writing, and almost totally restricted their statements regarding the audience to stimulated recall and interview sessions. (EL)

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Evidence of Audience Awareness in the Writing and Writing Processes of Nine- and Eighteen-Year Olds

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Abstract

This study explores how writers use audience awareness and how that awareness is related to the writer's age. Eight writers, four at ages nine and eighteen, wrote about two different memorable places, one in a letter to a good friend, the other in a letter to a great aunt from France whom they had never met. While responding to these tasks, writers produced thinking-aloud writing protocols. At the end of each writing session, the letter and taped writing protocol became the basis for a stimulated recall discussion. When both tasks were completed, writers were interviewed about the relationship between the audience and two writing tasks.

Analyses indicate that writers at both ages were aware of the differences between the two contrasting audiences. Eighteen-year-old writers demonstrated their awareness throughout the writing process and afterwards during stimulated recall and interview sessions. Nine-year-old writers, by contrast, were preoccupied with the mechanics and content of the letter, thinking little about the audience while they composed. They were aware of the audience only after composing, creating retrospective descriptions of their audiences and hypothetical justifications for their composing decisions. The analyses also indicate that the eighteen-year olds adapted their writing processes to the two audiences by spending more time analyzing the audience, setting goals, and reviewing written text when writing for the unfamiliar "great aunt." When writing to their "good friend" writers spent time resolving the conflict between their awareness of the friend and of the investigator. The audiences also influenced the voices writers used in their letters.

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Evidence of Audience Awareness in the Writing and Writing Processes of Nine- and Eighteen-Year Olds

> Children are not at any stage as egocentric as Piaget has claimed. For all human beings, the taking of another point of view requires a certain effort, and the difficulty is bound to vary from one situation to another in many complex ways. But the gap between children and adults is not so great in this respect as has recently been widely believed (Donaldson, 1978, 55-56).

Piaget may have overgeneralized when he claimed that children as old as twelve years often exhibit the residue of egocentric thinking (Ginsburg & Opper, 1979). It appears that Piaget's claims were based on perceptual and cognitive tasks which were inappropriate for the children being tested. Recent studies (Maratsos, 1973; Hughes, 1975; Kroll, 1984) suggest that even preschool children may be able to take the point of view of their audiences and adapt their communication accordingly. These researchers have found that when children are spoken to in language they can understand and are given an appealing occasion for communicating, they are able to adapt messages for an audience.

Children may be labelled--inaccurately--as egocentric not only because we give them inappropriate tasks and instructions, but also because we have looked for indications of their audience awareness primarily in the final communication product. For instance, composition researchers have asked subjects to write for different audiences, and then have analyzed essays for audience-related adjustments in syntax (Crowhurst & Piché, 1977; Smith & Swan, 1978), and in the way information is presented (Bracewell, Scardamalia, & Bereiter, 1978). Research in speech (Flavell, 1968; Alvy, 1973; Delia and Clark, 1977) indicates that although children as young as six may be aware

that the audience affects communication, they aren't yet able to use this awareness. Consequently, while children may know that the needs of the audience are different from their own, evidence of their knowledge may not appear in the written or spoken text.

This line of research suggests that we need to look for evidence of audience awareness throughout the writing process as well as before and after writing. Researchers (Atlas, 1979; Flower & Hayes, 1980; Berkenkotter, 1981; Monahan, 1982) have employed verbal report techniques like thinking-aloud writing protocols, stimulated recalls, and interviews to probe for evidence of audience awareness. Considering the possibility that audience awareness can occur at various points during and after writing and the possibility that there are age-related, developmental differences among writers, I designed the portion of my research described here to answer the following question: At what points during the writing process do writers consider the needs of their audience, and are eighteen-year-old writers different from nine-year-old writers in this respect? (The complete study is reported in Fontaine, 1984.)

Design of the study

Sample and methods

Four nine-year-old subjects and four eighteen-year-old subjects responded to two different writing tasks (The complete tasks are presented in the Appendix.):

1. Write about a memorable place you have visited in response to a letter from a good friend.
2. Write about a different memorable place you have visited in response to a letter from your great aunt from France whom you've never met.

I chose this topic and audience combination after having tested several alternative ones in my pilot work. Pilot subjects at ages nine and eighteen found this topic interesting and these audiences appealing. The audiences were

also designed to contrast writers' responses to a familiar peer audience and to an unfamiliar adult audience.

At the first of three sessions with each writer, I trained the writer to produce a thinking-aloud writing protocol and to answer stimulated recall questions. Unbeknownst to the writers, this task was completed only for training purposes. The training procedure was important in two ways: to guarantee that both research tasks would be preceeded by a thinking-aloud writing protocol and stimulated recall session, and to ensure that the writers understood and were comfortable with verbal report activities--this was especially important for the nine-year olds. (See Fontaine, 1984a for a more detailed description of the training procedure.)

One week later, at session two, the writers completed a letter to a good friend and the accompanying thinking-aloud writing protocol. They then answered stimulated recall questions. Session three, the following week, was the same as session two, except the letters were directed to the writers' great aunt from France. After the stimulated recall questions, I interviewed each writer regarding the completed letters and the contrasting audiences.

Analysis of the data

Using guidelines set out by Flower and Hayes (1983) and Swarts, Flower, and Hayes (1980), I first marked those sections of the transcribed writing protocols where subjects were reading aloud from the task or the evolving letter and sections where subjects were speaking aloud the words being inscribed. Second, I segmented the remaining sections of the writing protocols into thinking-aloud "statements"--a word, phrase, sentence, or series of sentences which represent a single idea. Having listed the thinking-aloud statements, I identified and categorized those which made some reference to audience. My category system is adapted from Berkenkotter (1981):

1. Statements which analyze or represent the intended audience.
2. Statements which set goals or name plans with regard to the intended audience.
3. Statements which review unwritten text and style with regard to the intended audience.
4. Statements which review or edit existing, written text with regard to the intended audience.
5. Statements which set goals, review unwritten or written text with regard to the investigator or the experimental situation.

To check the reliability of my coding, I asked a trained reader first to identify thinking-aloud statements in several protocols and second to code the appropriate statements according to my five audience-related categories. On the first part of this reliability check the reader and I had 95% and 85% agreement on the nine-year-old's and eighteen-year-old's respective writing protocols. On the second check, we had 100% and 83% agreement.

My stimulated recall procedures were influenced by the work of Rose (1984). To ensure validity, my study was designed so that writers did not know my focus of interest. Consequently, like Rose's stimulated recall questions, mine were varied, focusing not only on audience concerns, but on all writing behaviors. Another reason for focusing on all writing behavior is that there may have been moments during the writing process--in addition to those in the writing protocol--when writers made but did not verbalize decisions based on the audience. Only in open-ended stimulated recall discussions were these decisions revealed. Examining the stimulated recall transcripts closely, I identified those responses which referred to the audience.

The interview questions asked writers about the relationship between their letters and the two audiences. I abbreviated these responses and put

them on single sheets for easy reference.

To see whether the writers' sense of the audience had resulted in identifiable differences in their letters, I removed all obvious clues from the letters (names, references to France, references to the writers' relationship with the audience) and asked two readers to determine independently the intended audience for each letter and to explain the bases for their choices.

Findings

I will report the findings of my analyses by characterizing the audience awareness demonstrated by the four eighteen-year-old and four nine-year-old writers. The audience awareness of each age group will then be illustrated using representative individuals. The eighteen-year-olds produced long writing protocols, letters, and stimulated recall and interview responses and were remarkably consistent as a group. In light of this, the work of one writer supplies us with enough information for a representative profile of the age group. However, the nine-year-old writers produced brief writing protocols, letters, and stimulated recall and interview responses. And as a group, they were less consistent than the older writers. Consequently, in order to give a valid representation of that age group, I will draw my illustrations from two nine-year old writers.

The eighteen year-old-writers

A Characterization of the age group

The eighteen-year-old writers considered the needs of their audience while they were writing and in stimulated recall and interview discussions after their letters were written. In their thinking-aloud writing protocols I found instances of audience-related statements in all five categories (See Table 1).

--Insert Table 1 about here--

Also, there was a noticeable difference between the kinds of statements made most often in protocols for the letters to a friend and those made most often in protocols for the letters to a great aunt. While writing to a good friend, writers spent considerable time thinking aloud about the investigator as an audience. While writing to their great aunt, writers thought more often about setting goals and reviewing their sentences and ideas before writing them.

The eighteen-year olds' stimulated recall and interview responses also demonstrated their concern for the two constrasting audiences. The writers had a strong sense of their audience and of how the audience affected the content and presentation of their letters.

The eighteen-year olds' letters indicate that the writers translated their awareness of audience into their writing. Outside readers successfully identified the intended audiences of the letters, and were able to justify their choices.

A representative writer: Cheralee

Cheralee's writing protocols contain many thinking aloud statements which refer to the audience. She begins both of the writing tasks by considering her audience. [The singly underlined portions are sections where the writer is reading from the task or from the text she has written; the doubly underlined portions are sections where she is inscribing text as she speaks; the remaining sections are thinking-aloud statements.]

> Ok ah first I'm going to go ahead and put my audience down--
>
> Audience--(clears throat)--ah--and the audience is a good friend--
> ========= ============
> who--who--is my--age--and--who--I--have--known--for--a--long--time.
> ==
> (Protocol 1A p. 1.1-4)

> Ok, let's see, have to think of a good place. Well, if she's from France then she might not know a whole bunch about the United States. I'd like to write about somewhere that I went that would be exciting to her because she's used to Europe. So I should probably write about a place that--that maybe she hasn't had a chance to see (Protocol 1E p. 1.1-6).

Cheralee thought differently about the two contrasting audiences. While writing the letter to her good friend, Cheralee made many more references to the investigator and about the experimental task than she did while writing to her great aunt. These references were most often in regard to the format that her writing would take. Even though the task requested that she write a letter, Cheralee had to convince herself.

> I'm gonna--I'm gonna go ahead and write it in the same--in the same format that I would write a normal letter I think. Because that way--well--I don't know; maybe I could write it in essay form. But then it wouldn't really sound as personal, and it wouldn't really sound like a letter. My purpose wouldn't be fulfilled if I--if I wrote it in essay form instead of a letter form. (Protocol 1A p. 1.29-31).

Once Cheralee decides to use the letter format, she continues, throughout her writing process, to show concern for her audience and purpose in a way that seems much more appropriate for an experimental task than for a friendly letter.

> This is--much too specific, because--I'm not sticking to my purpose which was to describe the view not the room (Protocol 1A p. 6.2-4).
>
> I hope I'm not getting too far from my purpose (Protocol 1A p. 7.26-27).

> I'm going to reread this whole thing again and see how it sounds so far. I'll start with the audience and purpose to make sure (Protocol 1A p. 10,11.39-1).

In writing the letter to her great aunt from France, Cheralee's greatest concerns regarding the audience were that the content of the letter be appropriate for her aunt (goal setting), and to carefully review her text before inscribing it on the page (reviewing unwritten text). Here are examples of both.

> Setting goals about content:
> I'd like to write about somewhere that I went that would be very exciting to her--because she's used to Europe. So I should probably write about a place that maybe, maybe she hasn't had a chance to see (Protocol 1B p. 1.5-10).

> Since I don't know her, then I'd probably want to--you know--thank her for the letter. And I wouldn't go into what I'm going to explain as rapidly as I would with someone else because they, they know me, and they know what I've been doing, and they know why I went somewhere (Protocol 1B p. 2.24-27).

> Reviewing unwritten text:
> [What should I call her? Clara?] That sounds good. That sounds French (Protocol 1B p. 2.9-10).

> I was thinking before I wrote the introductory paragraph that I'd say something about learning a lot, but I don't think so. That's pretty--I could expand on that so much and [it would] be a really long, long letter (Protocol 1B p. 8.22-25).

Cheralee's stimulated recall and interview responses indicate that once her writing process was complete, she continued to express her understanding of the effects of audience. Moreover, her preoccupation with the investigator and the experimental task are echoed in her post-writing discussion of the letter to her good friend, and her overriding concern with generating ideas that are appropriate for her audience are reiterated in the discussions of the letter to her great aunt.

While listening to the tape of Cheralee's writing protocol for her letter to a friend, I asked her about the following statement that she had made: "This seems strange--to write it--a letter" (Protocol 1A p. 3.16-17). Cheralee's response, like statements in her writing protocol, demonstrates her awareness of the investigator as a real and immediate audience.

> [It seems strange] that you'd have me write a letter. I guess I wasn't sure whether you wanted it . . . that you wanted it in letter form or whether in essay form. So I went back to this [the task] to be sure (Stimulated recall 1A p. 2).

Regarding the writing protocol for the letter to her great aunt, Cheralee's stimulated recall responses emphasize her desire to choose the right words and ideas for her great aunt.

> [Why did you choose "displays assembled" rather than 'displays up?"] Probably because of who I was writing to. [For] a friend--I would have [used] "had their displays up." It wouldn't have to be elaborate (Stimulated recall 1B p. 7).

> I was trying to make it all sound very exciting and everything . . . I didn't include my being bored because I was sitting here trying to tell her that it was exciting (Stimulated recall 1B p. 9).

When discussing the letter to her good friend, Cheralee expressed a different sense of which ideas were appropriate or necessary.

> If [the audience] is someone that you write to often then they usually know your personality well enough that you don't really need too explain what you're saying a whole lot (Stimulated recall 1A p. 6).

> It's easier to write for a friend . . . I relax more, and I just say whatever comes to mind instead of worrying about the format type thing and words (Interview p. 2).

As the above examples illustrate, Cheralee's concern with her audience after writing was consistent with the concern expressed in her writing protocols.

The outside readers correctly identified the intended audiences for Cheralee's two letters. One reader made her decision based on the "casual," "conversational" qualities of the letter to a good friend, and the "conventional," "polite," and "formal" qualities of the letter to a great aunt. The second reader responded similarly, claiming that in the former letter some of the details were better-suited for the friend (particularly a reference to nude bathing) and that the latter letter was "more gracious." The first paragraphs from each of Cheralee's letters illustrate these characteristics.

(Letter to a friend)

Dear Carrie,

Krolle and I have now been in Deauville, France for almost three days! We had a long trip here from Copenhagen, Denmark. We took a ferry from Copenhagen to Travemunde, Germany and then we got

on a train that took us into the center of Deauville. Krolle has been here previously with her family, and they stayed at the same hotel that we are in. So, we didn't have any trouble finding it. We checked in at the front desk without the language problem that I had expected. Once we were all set, a short bell boy with a little mustache escorted us to our room. He looked like a stereotypic Frenchman!

(Letter to a great aunt)

Dear Clara,

Thank you very much for writing to me. I enjoyed hearing of your trip, and I"m looking forward to getting to know you better. Recently I, too, took a trip that was both exciting and educational. The drama club at my high school planned a four-day trip to New York over the Thanksgiving holiday. I looked forward to the trip for many weeks, and finally the big day of departure arrived.

The nine-year-old writers

A characterization of the age group

The nine-year olds expressed very little concern with the audience during their writing process. We can see from Table 1 that the few audience-related statements writers made in their protocols were almost completely restricted to goal setting--and most often these had to do with the content of the letters. The number of statements in first category is misleading because they were made by one writer. However, all of the nine-year olds contributed to the remaining categories.

After the writing process, nine-year olds demonstrated a much stronger sense of their audience and of how the audience affected their letters. In stimulated recall and interview responses, the writers offered reasonable

explanations, based on the audience, for choices they had made while writing.

The outside readers did not identify the intended audiences for the nine-year-olds' letters with as much success as they had the older writers' letters. The readers also found it more difficult to justify the decisions that they made.

Two representative writers: Jeff and Brandy

As can be seen from the following portions of their writing protocols, Jeff and Brandy voiced very little concern for the audience during the writing process. Those few statements regarding the audience that do occur, are, for the most part, goal setting questions the writers pose themselves about what to write. Even in these questions, the references to the audience are very general. (Single underline is reading; double underline is writing.)

Dear--friend--I--have--gone--to--the Si-erra--M-to the Sierras--to
the Sierras--I en-joyed--it.--The--first--in-ah--night--we--stayed--
stayed--at a--walk--in--camp--ground.--It--had--been--rain-ing--
for--a--long--time.--My--dad m-made--a--shelter--o--over--the--
picnic--ta-ble--table--with--a--tent--ah-- Let me see; now what
should I tell him (Jeff, Protocol 1A p. 1.1-7)?

Um--an important place and to write about--um San Diego Mission,
Cabrillo Point--Maybe um I will write about um, Perhaps you've
visited--Once--I--went--to--Disneyland. It--was--no, I messed it
up--Dear--friend--once--friend--I--am--going--to--tell--
you--about--um about um the time I went to--um--ok, Disneyland--
about-the time--I--went--to--Disneyland--how do you spell
Disneyland--um d-d-i-s-n-e-y--land--went to Disneyland--but wait,
let me read this over--Dear friend, I am going to tell--you about
the time I went to Disneyland--It--was--so--exciting--there--is--

> this--um--what is there--there is--ok, I'll tell themn about the
> =====
> rides--there is this--um--neat--ride--um, what about the neat rides
> ---------- ==========
> shall 1 tell them (Brandy, Protocol 1A p. 1.8-9)?

In the discussion that took place after the writing process, Jeff and Brandy both seemed to understand that the needs and characteristics of an audience can, indeed, affect a piece of writing.

In the original task, rather than suggesting how the writers should present the information in their letters, I described several ways that it could be done--using persuasion, narration, or description. During our stimulated recall discussion of the letter to a friend, Brandy explained that, because of information about the audience that she did not have, she was not able to write a persuasive letter.

> It's just that I was supposed to [reads from task] "try to convince your friend" that we went somewhere better like. And I didn't know where he went (Brandy, Stimulated recall p. 1).

In addition to understanding that knowledge of the audience could affect how she presented her information, Brandy also understood that audience may have affected her topic choice.

> I chose [Disneyland] because I felt that [my friend] would like--because I thought it was a kid, so he'd like a place more like play. And I thought this aunt [the intended audience] would like to know about my other aunt [the topic of the letter] (Brandy, Interview p. 2).

During Jeff's stimulated recall discussion he considered the physical distance between him and his great aunt from France when he justifed the brevity of his letter (four sentences).

> [This is] more like what most people would write for a letter because it's not very much, and it--For most people it'd cost a lot for them to send even just a little letter to a place that far away. And they wouldn't write too much either if they were writing to that place (Jeff, Stimulated recall 1B p. 2).

Both Brandy and Jeff gave reasonable answers to the interview question which asked them what their friend or great aunt would have found most impressive about the place in the letter. Brandy explained that her friend would be most impressed by the "neat rides" at Disneyland and her great aunt would be impressed by her having gone to the movies. Jeff believed his friend would find the bears on the camping trip most impressive, and his aunt would be impressed that he went to Cabrillo Monument (a whale watching site in San Diego, California) and didn't see any whales. The latter would be true, Jeff explained, only "if she knows about Cabrillo Monument."

The outside readers felt that of the letters written by the four nine-year olds in my study those pairs written by Jeff and Brandy had the most noticeable differences. The readers correctly identified the intended audiences for these letters and justified their choices. Jeff's letters have one obvious difference--the letter to his friend is four and a half pages long; the letter to his great aunt is six lines long. One of my readers offered her own thoughtful, audience-related explanation for this difference: "I think [Jeff] didn't know what to say to someone he doesn't know, especially an adult."

The contrasting voices in Brandy's letters seem to be related to the two different audiences. Readers described Brandy's letter to her friend as being "energetic" and "breathless." The letter to her great aunt was a "simple catalog of events" and "revealed little about the writer." These qualities are apparent in the two letters. (I have left the original spelling and

punctuation in the letters.)

(Letter to a friend)

Dear Friend,

I am going to tell you about the time I went to Disneyland. It was so exciting. There is this neat ride. I forget the name of the ride but I remember it goes down this waterfall. It was very scary. I almost fell out. I was so scared I hid under the dashboard. When I stood up to sit down on the floor. I fell! It was close but I grabed onto my seat climbed back in and I did not sit on the floor I sat on my seat and held on. For lunch I had this delisious hamberger, fries and a large coke. We went home at 2:00 in the morning.

(Letter to a great aunt)

Dear Aunt,

Last week I went to my other Aunts house. We went up to the mountains. We also went to see A Man from Snowy River. We got some toys there too. They have a two story house. They have romates too. Me and my sister slept on the floor it was very uncomfortable. When we woke up our back hurt. We had breakfast, played dominoes and then met my Mom and Dad at the deli. Then me and my sister went home.

Discussion

Nine- and eighteen-year-old writers in my study demonstrated an understanding of their audiences and an awareness that audiences affect writers' decisions. The two age groups differ in <u>when</u> they consider the audience.

The eighteen-year olds considered the audience while they were writing

and in stimulated recall and interview discussions. Moreover, their writing protocols revealed that the two different audiences led writers to different concerns. The overriding concern in the letter to a good friend was with the investigator. While we can fault the experimental situation for creating a "double audience", we can also see that this situation highlights the eighteen-year olds' sensitivity to the rhetorical problem and their ability to evaluate and respond to a complex audience. It would seem that the irreconcilable contrast between the intended audience--good friend--and the unnamed but present audience--the investigator--caused the writers concern. Cheralee demonstrates her concern about responding to both audiences throughout her writing protocol. She has nearly completed a letter that is quite appropriate for the intended audience--a good friend--when she asks herself: "I wonder if--if [the investigator's name] wants me to write like--it's a letter, maybe I should include a part about--like 'I hope you're fine.'"

Writing to a great aunt from France whom they'd never met, the writers seemed more able to reconcile the intended audience and the investigator--perhaps because both were adult strangers. In this letter the overriding concern was to include ideas, words, and sentences that were appropriate for an unknown, impressible adult audience. Writers' stimulated recall and interview responses were consistent with the concerns voiced in their writing protocols.

The nine-year-olds' statements regarding the audience were almost totally restricted to their stimulated recall and interview discussions. These writers seldom reflected on their audiences while they were writing. And when they did, it was almost exclusively in terms of what to say to them. Although the writers had a sense that their letters would be read, the audience was an anonymous "him" or "them."

However, in stimulated recall and interview responses, the nine-year olds demonstrated an awareness that the audience can affect their writing. Writers justified, in terms of the audience, decisions they had made while writing. Jeff explained the brevity of the letter to his great aunt and both Jeff and Brandy explained their topic choices in terms of their audiences. Although these examples from Jeff and Brandy suggest that nine-year olds know audiences can affect what writers write, it is unlikely that the justifications they offered were based on actual decisions from their writing process. This was especially clear in Jeff's case. Recall the outside reader who felt that Jeff wrote so much in the letter to his friend and so little in the letter to his great aunt because he didn't know what to write to an adult. Jeff's own explanation was that it would cost too much to send a long letter so far away. However, the real reason for Jeff's having written a long letter to his friend may have been that he wanted to get out of math class (Stimulated recall 1A p. 2). And the letter to his great aunt may have been short because Jeff was in a hurry to return to his science project (Extemporaneous discussion with investigator). It appears that the nine-year-old writers hypothesized about the effect of the audiences and retrospectively justfied decisions they had made earlier. Alvy (1973), and Delia and Clark (1977) reported similar findings. Twelve-year-old subjects were able to explain differences among audiences and to effect corresponding changes in their own communication. Six- and nine-year-old subjects explained the differences among the audiences, but could not effect related changes in their speech.

Explaining or hypothesizing about audience differences without adapting communciation accordingly is an ineffective use of knowledge about the audience--and it explains why the readers in my study had difficulty identifying the intended audiences of the nine-year-olds' letters. Nonetheless, when young writers use their knowledge of the audience to form convincing hypotheses and justifications about the effects of an audience on

communciation, they are taking someone else's point of view and acting in a non-egocentric manner.

The differences between the nine- and eighteen-year-old writers in my study may be attributed to the limitations of their generalizing and conceptualizing skills. Vygotsky (1934) found that until the age of about twelve, children had difficulty generalizing about themselves and others--a difficulty that would be compounded by the additional demands of writing. What appears to be lack of concern with the audience, may be the youngster's preoccupation with the immediate demands of writing (see Scardamalia, Bereiter, & Goelman, 1982). Once the demands of writing have been satisfied, the writer can focus attention on those generalizations necessary for taking another's point of view. We can contrast this behavior with that of the eighteen-year-old writers who had little difficulty juggling the demands of writing with the demands of forming and using generalizations about the audience.

Implications and conclusions

For centuries, theorists and researchers have proclaimed that writer's awareness of audience is an essential feature of effective writing. As Aristotle explained, audience is the ultimate reason for which discourse exists. The writer takes the audience into account at every stage of writing--choosing a topic, selecting content, organizing content, making stylistic choices. Given that audience is so important, teachers of writing need to help students develop to their fullest potential a clear, strong sense of audience.

According to my findings, young writers have a developing awareness of audience--one which allows them to describe rationally the audience/writer relationship. How can we foster this developing awareness? Too often the teacher is the only audience for whom students write. As a result, students

misunderstand writing to be an activity whose function ends with a grade in the classroom. Writing loses--or never realizes--its communicative function for these youngsters.

Park (1982) describes the continuing debate among literary theorists about whom the writer's audience is--a real individual (Bleich, 1978; Rosenblatt, 1978) or a fictional representation that writers create for themselves (Ong, 1975). My research suggests that the writer's audience is both real and representational. The eighteen-year-old writers in my study shifted between the two. When they could, the writers imagined and wrote for a real friend or aunt. However, when they knew no one with whom they could replace the generic friend or great aunt, or when they did not have sufficient information about the real audience, writers used their representation of how they imagined the audience to be. The nine-year olds seemed to be trapped, having neither a real nor a representational image of the audience, but only an ill-defined sense of the "other." Note that while all of the eighteen-year olds in my study used a name when addressing their letters, none of the nine-year olds did. They all opened with "Dear Friend," or "Dear Aunt." By giving writers the opportunity to write for real audiences as well as for imaginary ones, writing teachers could lead young writers to understand writing as a communicative activity. They could help writers out of the trap where they write for the "other", help them to incorporate audience awareness into their writing.

Questions about audience awareness need further study. My sample of writers was necessarily small. Would the results be similar with different writers? Younger writers? Writers with diverse socio-economic backgrounds? Verbal report data are valuable because they allow researchers access to writers' composing processes. However, like all research methods, verbal reports have limitations. First, it is likely that children younger than nine-years old would be unable to cope with the mechanical demands of

thinking-aloud writing protocols. Second, the procedures of collecting verbal report data are necessarily intrusive and, admittedly, do not account for everything that occurs during the writing process. In addition to verbal reports we need to try other research methods. Naturalistic observation, like that reported by Graves (1979), is an ideal way for researchers to observe the process of composing without being overly intrusive. Using observation, researchers could broaden their field of exploration, watching children's audience awareness develop at its earliest stages in the home (Robinson & Robinson, 1982; Taylor, 1983).

As my research suggests, audience awareness is a complex issue. We must expand our understanding of the issue by exploring writers' processes as well as their written texts. Finally, we must not draw conclusions about writers' abilities before we are certain that our research is fair and exhaustive.

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Appendix

Writing Task 1A

Everybody knows of something or some place worth talking about. Maybe you know about an important place like the Grand Canyon or the San Diego Mission or Cabrillo Point. Or you might know about the Pacific Ocean, the Atlantic Ocean or one of the deserts in North America. Perhaps you have visited Disneyland or the San Diego Zoo.

Imagine that a good friend of yours who lives in another part of the country has written you a letter about a special place that his or her family has just visited and that they will never forget. Your friend asks you if you have ever seen a place that you will remember forever. There are several ways that you can write a letter to answer your friend's question. You could tell your friend a story about something that happened when you were visiting an important or special place. You could describe the important or special place to your friend. Or you could try to convince your friend that the place you saw is more memorable than anything he or she could have seen. These are only three of many possible ways to respond to your friend. You might also have your own idea about how to write the letter.

Whichever way you choose to write the letter to your friend, it is important to remember that you are writing to a good friend, someone who is your age and whom you have known for a long time. Use the next hour to write your letter.

Writing Task 1B

Everybody knows of something or some place worth talking about. Maybe you know about an important place like the Grand Canyon or the San Diego Mission or Cabrillo Point. Or you might know about the Pacific Ocean, the Atlantic Ocean or one of the deserts in North America. Perhaps you have visited Disneyland or the San Diego Zoo.

Imagine that your mother's aunt writes you a letter from her home in France. You have never met her before since she has lived in France all of her life. In the letter that she writes to you, she tells you about a trip that she recently took. She says that she had a wonderful time and that she will never forget her trip. She also asks you if you have ever visited a place that you will remember forever. There are several ways that you can write a letter to your mother's aunt to answer her question. You could tell her a story about something that happened when you were visiting an important or special place. You could describe the important or special place to your mother's aunt. Or you could try to convince her that the place you saw is more memorable than anything she could have seen. These are only three of many possible ways to respond to your mother's aunt. You might also have your own idea about how to write the letter.

Whichever way you choose to write the letter, it is important to remember that you are writing to your mother's aunt, a woman who is much older than you and whom who have never met before because she has been living in France.

REMEMBER THAT YOU <u>CANNOT</u> WRITE ABOUT THE SAME PLACE THAT YOU DID LAST WEEK!

Table 1

Total Number of Occurrences of Each Category of Audience-Related Protocol Statements Per One hundred Protocol Statements

Grade	Categories of Audience-Related Statements					
	1 Analyzing or Representing the Audience	2 Setting Goals	3 Reviewing unwritten text	4 Reviewing written text	5 Goal setting and reviewing with respect to the investigator	Total
Eighteen-year olds						
Task IA[a]	1.27	3.18	.94	.51	2.41	8.39
Task IB	1.59	7.06	1.77	.46	1.14	12.75
Nine-year olds						
Task IA	0	6.80	.97	0	0	7.77
Task IB	5.17	6.90	0	0	0	12.06

[a]IA is the familiar peer audience
IB is the unfamiliar adult audience